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C E N T R A L I N T E L L I G E N C E A G E N C Y

Director of Intelligence

22 January 1964

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: CYPRUS: Threat of Renewed Violence and Turkish Intervention

SUMMARY

Tensions on Cyprus remain high and violence is likely to erupt again, especially if (as seems probable) the London conference breaks down. Renewed violence would put strong pressures on Turkey to intervene militarily. Before doing so, the Turks would probably seek Western -- especially US -- protection for the Turkish Cypriots, but the request would be urgent and the deadline very short.

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1. The present meeting in London to seek a solution to the Cyprus problem has provided only a momentary respite. None of the parties concerned entered the negotiations with any real expectation that the conference would succeed. The British have been unable to elaborate any solution of their own. They still hope that by keeping both sides talking tempers might cool sufficiently for compromises to develop. However, progress to date has been minimal and the positions of the Greek and Turkish communities remain as far apart as ever. Indeed, the conference may well fail.

2. Tension on Cyprus remains high. The Turkish and Greek communities in the urban centers remain physically separated with almost no contact. Incidents continue, and the presence of British troops is vital to the maintenance of even the present tenuous cease-fire. The control the Cypriot communal leaders exercise over their followers is questionable. President Makarios has once again unleashed forces that he cannot control. The Greek community is split into numerous paramilitary organizations with differing aims and orientations ranging from the Crypto-Communist to the far right. As a result of the heavy losses suffered by the Turkish Cypriot in the recent fighting, Vice President Kuchuk is seriously concerned about the safety and

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lives of his people. Thus neither side has much room for compromise. Both communities are seeking to import additional arms and readying defenses in preparation for the outbreak of fighting they consider likely. Meanwhile, weak governments in both Athens and Ankara are unable to exercise effective restraint.

3. The only hopeful signs are the fact that the apparent readiness of Turkey to intervene (as shown by the Turkish jet passes over Nicosia on Christmas day) has dampened somewhat the Greek Cypriot inclination to renew fighting, and that the British, who have brought in about 2,500 men since December 1963 to augment their normal base personnel, are now determined and able to control small riots. In the event of widespread disorders, however, they plan to withdraw their troops to the Sovereign Base Areas, and in any case are not willing to keep these additional troops on Cyprus for more than a few months.

4. All things considered, the chances of a breakdown of law and order are considerable and, in such an event, the first victims will be the Turkish Cypriots. Under such circumstances, pressure by the Turkish military for unilateral intervention would become almost irresistible. We do not believe Turkey would immediately invade Cyprus, but rather might first appeal for

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joint intervention by all the Guarantor Powers (Greece, Turkey, and the UK). They would also appeal to NATO, and particularly to the US, for assistance. Any delay on the part of the Western powers in taking whatever action was necessary to halt the fighting would be likely to cause the Turks to move military forces into Cyprus unilaterally. The 39th division in Iskenderun remains on alert for this purpose and, given Turkish air superiority in the Cyprus area, a Turkish invasion could not be stopped by either Cypriot or Greek forces.

5. Unilateral Turkish intervention would place Greek political and military leaders under overwhelming pressure to take military action despite their awareness of the dangers involved. We believe that Greek moves would, at least initially, consist of attempting to reinforce the Greek army contingent on Cyprus. However, by this time passions in both Greece and Turkey would be aroused to the point that further escalation would be difficult to prevent. The Greek Cypriots, moreover, would be likely to seek Soviet diplomatic intervention, which would almost certainly be forthcoming.

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6. Even if renewed violence breaks out on Cyprus, there would be no immediate likelihood of deliberate attacks on US installations or personnel by either side. However, there would be a considerable chance of accidental damage, and the powerful Cypriot Communist Party might try to destroy or compromise US installations. Moreover, Greek Cypriots might hold the US responsible for failure to prevent a Turkish invasion, which could lead to attacks on US facilities.

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